

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

Joseph C. Greenley, Director

FEDERAL AID TO FISH AND WILDLIFE RESTORATION

Job Performance Report

Project F-18-R-23



STATEWIDE FISHING HARVEST SURVEY

Job 3. Check Station Surveillance of Major Steelhead
Fisheries in Idaho

Period Covered: 1 March 1976 to 28 February 1977

by

Melvin Reingold
Principal Fishery Research Biologist

December, 1977

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JOB PERFORMANCE REPORT

State of Idaho Name: STATEWIDE FISHING HARVEST SURVEY
Project No. F-18-R-23 Title: check station surveillance of
Job No. III Major Steelhead Fisheries in
Idaho

Period Covered: 1 March 1976 to 28 February 1977

ABSTRACT

Anglers fishing the upper Salmon River during the fall of 1976 caught steelhead at a rate of 35 hours per fish. Approximately 26% of the steelhead caught were released back into the stream. About 47% of the catch was identified as hatchery origin fish.

Author:

Melvin Reingold
Principal Fishery Research Biologist

OBJECTIVES

To monitor the steelhead sport fishery data on a weekly basis by standardized check station methods.

To help evaluate returns to the creel from various hatcheries by checking for marked fish in the anglers' bag.

To aid in determining the number of steelhead utilizing major tributaries of the Salmon and Clearwater rivers.

INTRODUCTION

There was no steelhead sport fishery on the Salmon River during the spring of 1976. On 1 October 1976, the river was reopened to the taking of steelhead trout. The season bag limit (1 October - 31 December 1976) was three fish, with a daily bag and possession of one. Anglers were allowed to continue fishing for steelhead after the one fish daily limit had been reached with the stipulation that they release any more steelhead caught back to the river.

TECHNIQUES USED

Each Saturday and Sunday from 1 October through 28 November, we operated an angler check station on the Salmon River road near North Fork, Idaho. We set up the station at noon and operated until dark each day. We queried anglers on the hours they fished, fish caught, area fished, and inspected their catch whenever possible to define the percent of hatchery-origin steelhead.

FINDINGS

Anglers caught steelhead at a rate of 35 hours per fish during the fall 1976 season (Table 1). Approximately 74% of the steelhead caught were kept and the other 26% returned to the water. About 47% of the steelhead caught were of hatchery origin as distinguished by identifiable deformity of the dorsal fin.

Eighty-seven percent of the 1976 hatchery adult returnees were recognizable by deformed dorsal fins. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is presently using posters, notices on regulations and articles in newspapers and magazines urging anglers to look for this fin deformity on the steelhead they catch and to voluntarily release alive those fish that do not have it. This is an attempt to relieve some of the angler harvest on beleaguered wild stocks and transfer it to hatchery stocks more capable of withstanding it.

Contact with anglers in the field and at check stations indicate that the majority of steelhead fishermen are in accord with this idea and many had released wild fish.

Table 1. Summary of data collected at the steelhead angler check station operated near North Fork, Idaho, October-November 1976.

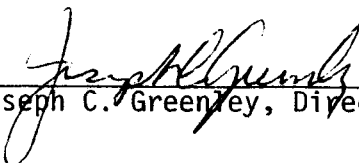
Dates	Anglers	Hours	Steelhead		Hours per fish		Percent hatchery
			Kept	Released	Kept	All	
10/1-3	229	1,749	14	4	125	97	36
10/9-10	137	975	12	2	81	70	42
10/16-17	144	1,059	16	2	66	59	44
10/23-24	166	1,185	38	12	31	24	50
10/30-31	125	1,162	36	19	32	21	50
11/6-7	145	962	22	3	44	38	41
11/13-14	162	1,066	30	18	35	22	60
11/20-21	130	733	20	6	37	28	40
11/27-28	26	124	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>50</u>
Total	1,264	9,015	190	66	47	35	47

Submitted by:

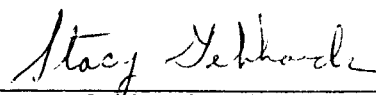
Melvin Reingold
Principal Fishery Research Biologist

Approved by:

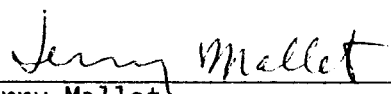
IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME



Joseph C. Greenley, Director



Stacy Gebhards, Chief
Bureau of Fisheries



Jerry Mallet
Fishery Research Supervisor
Bureau of Fisheries